DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 113 621 CG 010 123

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TITLE Glasser Discussions in Elementary School.
PUB DATE [74]
NOTE 22p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$1.58 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS Anxiety; *Classroom Guidance Programs; Counselor Role; Educational Development; Elementary Education; Group Counseling; *Motivation; Research Projects; *Self Concept; *Teacher Role
IDENTIFIERS *Glasser

ABSTRACT

Research results have suggested that reduction of anxiety and defensiveness among students in a group situation enhances school achievement and school motivation. The present study aimed at demonstrating that using the Glasser discussion method, which encourages students to take responsibility and discuss various problems that they face in school, increases motivation and improves their self-concept. Six groups of 10 elementary school students each served as subjects. Two groups were led by counselors, another two by teachers while the other two served as controls. The increase in school motivation, as assessed from the pre- and post-treatment scores of the subjects on the SCAMIN inventory, was significantly higher in the counselor-led groups than in the teacher-led groups, but the experimental groups were not significantly different from the control groups. The increase in self-concept, as assessed on the SCAMIN Inventory, was significantly higher in the teacher-led groups than it was either in the counselor-led or control groups. The author concludes by suggesting that the Glasser discussion techniques be used for a longer time span. (Author/SE)

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GLASSER DISCUSSIONS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

Minimal gains were demonstrated in the increase of Motivation and Self-Concept scores on the Scamin Inventory when Glasser Classroom Discussion techniques were employed in three third grade classrooms. The increase in Motivation was found in a counselor led classroom discussion and the increase in Self-Concept resulted when a teacher used the same techniques in her own classroom.

Since the study was carried for only one semester, it was recommended on the basis of this study that the discussion techniques be used for a longer time span, in order to increase the improvement in these two areas.

GLASSER DISCUSSIONS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The helping professions, interested in growth and behavior, make constant attempts at assisting elementary school children retain the ability to experience daily living without denial of its emotional impact upon self. There is a growing belief that individuals experience more success in life if they are able to relate well with one another, and that school achievement itself will be improved in an atmosphere of acceptance and cooperation. The goal of this study is to put into effect a program which is hoped will make a positive and enhancing approach in the lives of elementary school children.

Research studied has had a variety of goals and outcomes, aimed at aspects of human experience and growth whose end would enrich life. Problem areas have been uncovered, many of them relating to academic achievement and the growth that results from it. It has been confirmed that anxiety and defensiveness interfere with intellectual function. (Ruebush, 1960) It has also been found that reduction of anxiety and defensiveness by group method is helpful. (Stetter, 1969, Clements, 1966, Cummings, 1967) From statements of pupils participating in these studies, the benefits of lowered anxiety seem to result from learning that other students shared similar problems and anxiety. One study, not emphasizing a reduction in anxiety, confirmed that those counseled in a group will make a greater gain in academic achievement than those who have not been so counseled. (Taylor, 1968) In this last study, the influence of the counseling method was seen to bring about improved be-

havior as measured by the school system as well as by improved academic progress.

As various groups have developed, the amount of cohesiveness has effected positive changes in self esteem, and the reverse has been true, that changes in self esteem are reflected in sociometric status of children within a group or in relationships outside the group. (Biasco, 1965, Lott and Lott, 1966, Zander, Statland and Wolfe, 1960). It should be noted that all of these do not show a statistically significant result, but some movement toward positive outcomes.

One study of particular interest showed that a developmental approach to group teaching brings about a favorable response and confirmation by student statement that improvement was made in understanding self and others. (Moore, 1969). Dinkmeyer has theorized that developmental group counseling enables counselors to reach more children effectively. He indicates that the group provides the opportunity for social movement and interaction among peers and that the children benefit from the corrective influence and encouragement within the group. (Dinkmeyer, 1970).

Due to limited numbers of counselors and time available for each school it is increasingly more important to provide counseling for larger numbers of students within the same time span. By total class group counseling, students become acquainted with a counselor and seem more free to seek help on individual problems. In addition to more children being provided counseling services, more groups are requested. These groups help pupils view the counselor as an understanding friend. (Patzau, 1971).

It has been suggested that whether or not structured or non-structured methods are utilized, pupils make gains in areas such as self-concept and

emotional expansiveness. (Crow, 1971). This would indicate that the group itself is an influence upon members within the group. This has also been suggested by research. One such study showed that peer helpers could assist the counselor to work more effectively with children than the counselor alone. (Kern and Kirby, 1971).

One study, demonstrated that children with high self esteem respond to success-failure outcomes of problem solving behavior with stronger belief in internal control than subjects with lower levels of esteem. This study implies that the belief in one's powerlessness arising from membership in a stigmatized minority group may be cushioned by a positive self-concept. (Epstein, 1971).

Briefly, the above studies suggest that group counseling may result in anxiety reduction, increased understanding of self, improved behavior and academic achievement.

Of particular interest have been efforts to give assistance to children through William Glasser's Classroom Discussion techniques. (Glasser, 1971). Hawes suggested that using these group methods in a classroom resulted in the child's belief in himself as having power for success, rather than seeing himself powerless and a failure. This last study was conducted with black children as subjects.

These techniques foster responsibility being taken by children, and gives them the opportunity to think through many problems which confront them in the school setting. The program calls for involvement of leader and pupils in common concerns, and requires that pupils commit themselves to carrying out self-initiated plans regarding behavior change. (Glasser, 1971). While the above study was only for black children, it is also

believed that these methods would be beneficial to students in schools other than those which are predominantly black.

PROBLEM

The problem of this study was to demonstrate that self concept and motivation will be enhanced by Glasser Discussion Techniques employed by school counselors in the elementary grades.

NULL HYPOTHESES

It was hypothesized that on comparing experimental and control groups:

1. There will be no significant difference in the degree of change demonstrated by the use of Glasser's Classroom Techniques as measured by the Motivation score of the SCAMIN Profile.
2. There will be no significant difference in the degree of change demonstrated by the use of Glasser's Classroom Techniques as measured by the Self Concept score of the SCAMIN Profile.

Rationale for these hypotheses stem from research suggesting that children who participate in group counseling make progress in the realization of their own self worth in coping effectively with self, peers and authority figures; and the realization that those who feel worthy and capable are happy people. Its relevance to the school situation is based upon the belief that there is a positive relationship between being accepted by peers and academic achievement, (Muma, 1965), and between self understanding ultimately resulting in a more favorable self concept, and improved school achievement.

PROCEDURE

The subjects were third graders in a district in a Pacific Northwest city. The subjects were divided into four experimental groups with 10 members in each group, and two control groups of 10 members each. The first and third experimental groups were in a classroom where a counselor conducted Glasser's Classroom Discussions, and the second and fourth experimental groups were in a classroom where the teacher used the same treatment. The two control groups were in a classroom where no treatment was given. The first and second experimental groups and one control group were pre and post-tested on the SCAMIN Self-Concept and Motivation Inventory.

Pre-testing was administered as a check of equiprobability to experimental group^1, experimental group^2 and control group^1. As a check on the possibility of contamination by pre-testing of these three groups, additional subjects from the two experimental classrooms and the control classroom were only post-tested. These are experimental group^3, experimental group^4, and control group^2. All groups were post-tested.

The SCAMIN Self-Concept and Motivation Inventory is composed of 24 questions beginning with "What face would you wear...?" to which the pupil responds by darkening the nose of the face which he chooses as depicting the one he would wear in a given situation. The faces are either smiling or frowning. As indicated in the title, this inventory is made up of factors of self concept, which are: role expectations and self adequacy; and the factors of motivation: goal and achievement needs, and failure avoidance.

In order to diminish bias on the part of each group, the pre-tests and post-tests were administered by the classroom teachers. Testing by

teacher administration without announcement of the experimental program reduces the Hawthorne effect of the experiment, as does a group's being conducted without reference to the experimental nature of the treatment.

Treatment for the experimental groups was the Glasser classroom discussion technique. For rooms containing experimental groups there were weekly sessions with the discussions revolving around topics chosen by the leader or by the pupils. The discussions focus on either problem areas or topics of interest to the class members. The control groups received no special treatment. All groups continued with their regular school work.

It was predicted that the experimental groups would demonstrate a difference in the motivation and self concept scores as a result of the treatment used, and that there would be a difference exhibited between them and the control group. It was recognized that a self concept forming from 8 to 9 years will not change drastically in one semester's time. It was anticipated that the classrooms subjected to treatment would reach, at the most, a 0.10 level of significance. Analysis of Variance was used to compare the pre- and post-test means for the groups. The SCAMIN Inventory scores provided statistical evidence for the experiment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of Variance was used to compare the pre-test means on the two categories of the SCAMIN Inventory for the three groups. The pre-test Analysis of Variance assured the equiprobability of the two groups, with the F-ratio at 1.167 for the Motivation score as presented in Table 1, and the F-ratio at 0.087 for the Self-Concept score of the Inventory as presented in Table 2.

TABLE 1

Analysis of Variance of the Pre-test Motivation Scores for Experimental and Control Groups

Source	df	SS	MS	F
Between groups	2	8.867	4.433	1.167*
Within groups	27	102.500	3.796	

*F 10,2,27 = 2.52

TABLE 2

Analysis of Variance of Pre-test Self-Concept Scores for Experimental and Control Groups

Source	df	SS	MS	F
Between Groups	2	1.400	0.700	0.0463*
Within Groups	27	407.800	15.1037	

*F.10,2,27 = 2.52

Following treatment, the post-test scores were subjected to Analysis of Variance to test the data. In testing the data for Motivation, a significant difference is suggested as presented in Table 3. A 0.10 level of significance had been determined as the desired level, taking into consideration the small size of the groups, small number of sessions, and the length of time of the treatment. The F-ratio exceeded the 0.10 level of significance.

In checking for differences among the data, the Least Significant Difference Test was applied. These comparisons suggested a significant difference at one critical point as indicated in Table 4. This point suggested that there is a significant difference between the effect of the teacher led and counselor led discussion groups of third graders with respect to motivation. The counselor led discussions seem to have more effect upon motivation than do the teacher led discussions. There is no significant difference between either experimental group and the control group.

In testing the data for Motivation of the three groups of students who had not been pre-tested, there was no significant difference suggested by the Analysis of Variance to which the scores on Motivation were subjected. However, all means of the scores were higher than on the pre-tested groups, indicating slight increases in motivation in the semester's time. This could be considered a result of maturation rather than due to the treatment of the Glasser Classroom Discussion Techniques since all three classrooms showed gains in the area of Motiva-

TABLE 3

Analysis of Variance of Post-test Motivation Scores for Experimental and Control Groups

Source	df	SS	MS	F
Between Groups	3	63.2667	31.6333	2.84*
Within Groups	27	200.100	11.1148	

*F.10,2,27 = 2.52

TABLE 4

LEAST SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE AMONG MEANS OF POST-TEST SCORES FOR MOTIVATION FOR EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS

Group	Means	Teacher Led	Control Group	Counselor Led
Teacher Led	47.00	---	1.20	3.50*
Control Group	48.20	---	---	2.30
Counselor Led	50.50	---	---	---

*t..05,2,27 = 3.04

tion. Analysis of Variance test of the scores on Motivation is presented in Table 5.

In testing the data for Self-Concept, a significant difference is suggested. A 0.10 level of significance had been determined as the desired level as in the Motivation portion of the Inventory, but Analysis of Variance revealed a difference exceeding the 0.05 level as indicated on Table 6.

In checking for differences among the data, the Least Significant Difference comparison test was again applied. This comparison suggested a significant difference at two critical points. (Table 7) This suggested that a teacher led discussion did more to foster the self concept of the students than did a counselor led group. It is also noted that a significant difference is suggested between between the control room and that in which the teacher led the discussions.

In checking for differences among the three non pre-tested groups, Analysis of Variance did not reveal a significant difference., as indicated on Table 8.

TABLE 5

Analysis of Variance of Post-test Motivation Scores of Experimental and Control Groups not Pre-tested

Source	df	SS	MS	F
Between Groups	2	16.200	8.10	1.8074*
Within Groups	27	121.000	4.48	

*F10,2,27 = 2.52

TABLE 6

Analysis of Variance of the Post-Test Self Concept Scores of the Experimental and Control Groups

Source	df	SS	MS	F
Between Groups	2	153.000	76.900	3.6781*
Within Groups	27	564.500	20.9079	

*F.10,2,27 = 2.52
*F.05,2,27 = 3.33

TABLE 7

LEAST SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE AMONT MEANS OF POST-TEST SCORES FOR SELF CONCEPT OF EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS

Group	Means	Counselor Led	Control Group	Teacher Led
Counselor Led	43.00	---	.20	4.90*
Control Group	43.80	---	---	4.70*
Teacher Led	48.50	---	---	---

*t.05,2,27 = 3.16

TABLE 8

Analayis of Variance of Post-test Self Concept Scores for Non Pre-tested Experimental and Control Groups

Source	df	SS	MS	F
Between Groups	2	0.00	0.00	0.00
Within Groups	27	403.20	14.93	

*F.10,2,27 = 2.52

CONCLUSIONS

The data from the experiment leads to the beliefs that:

1. A minimal degree of increase in motivation in third graders will result when Glasser's Discussion Techniques are employed by a counselor within a semester's time.
2. A greater degree of increase of self concept in third graders will result when Glasser's Discussion Techniques are employed by a teacher within a semester.
3. Prolonged use of these materials may result in increased gain in components of motivation.
4. A better match of testing materials with the techniques could be found. Possibly these could be constructed by the use of benefits attested to by students and teachers in the classrooms where the techniques are used.

The school district could be encouraged to continue the use of the materials for a longer time span, and the same children could be tested to determine if, within a year or two, there is a more definite improvement in areas of motivation and self concept.

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